

Wetland Reserve Easement Signup Announced

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE) program provides eligible landowners the opportunity to restore, enhance and/or create wetlands. This program focuses on areas where cropping is starting to become economically infeasible due to current soil conditions. Eligible tracts of land are: locations that are hard to get to during the spring or sites where the harvest can be challenging due to wetness. Most of these sites have soils that are hydric or are subject to flooding that makes agricultural management infeasible to continue to farm. Dedicating the area for wildlife habitat purposes may be an alternative to economic losses from maintenance, site preparation, fuel, and labor on sites that are only occasionally harvested.

WRE will pay up to \$3,500 per acre on agricultural land and up to \$1,750 per acre on non-agricultural land. This compensation is paid for placing an easement on the property deed. In exchange, the landowner maintains ownership right to control access and the opportunity to profit from undeveloped recreational uses like hunting and fishing. This program has also proven to be successful for landowners who took the funds paid by USDA and invested in land better suited for farming.

With the recent increases of rainfall and population growth in this country, wetland areas are critical in controlling flooding and remove excess nutrients from the surface water. Aldo Leopold once said "I am glad I will not be young in a future without wilderness". This program allows landowners to have a long-lasting impact on the health of their community while ensuring that future generations have access to high quality wild areas.

To learn about WRE and other technical and financial assistance available contact NRCS at the Salem USDA Service Center; 801 Anson Street.

For more information about easements in Indiana, visit: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/programs/easements/>

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